

**FAX**

Date

2/25/98

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TO:

(MARTHA CONTEE, Chief)

Public Service Division

FCC

Room 222

1919 M Street

Wash DC

Phone

202-418-0263

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202-418-1196

FROM:

Commission on Deaf and  
Hearing Impaired

1245 Farmington Avenue

West Hartford, CT 06107-  
2668

Ben Pedersen

1-800-708-6796

Phone

860 566 7414

Fax Phone

860 561 0162

CC:

REMARKS:



Urgent



For your review



Reply ASAP



Please Comment

Enclosed please find a letter  
of our deaf/HH consumers'  
Comments on emergency captioning.  
Deadline of the submission is  
February 25, 1998. Please give this  
to proper channel - Thank you!

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**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
***Commission on the Deaf and Hearing Impaired***  
1245 Farmington Avenue, West Hartford, CT 06107-2668

February 25, 1998

Secretary,  
Federal Communications Commission  
1919 M Street, Room 222  
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Sirs:

RE: The Matter of Closed Captioning and Video Description of Video Programming  
MM Dkt. No. 95-176

Since 1974, the Connecticut Commission on Deaf and Hearing Impaired has received many complaints about the lack of emergency broadcasts being closed captioning from deaf and hard of hearing consumers. CDHI has made efforts to educate TV stations in the state through discussions and suggestions on how to improve the accessibility for deaf/HH TV viewers.

Due to the recent Federal Communications Commission (FCC)'s *Further Notice of Proposed Rule* regarding televised emergency information to people with hearing disabilities, CDHI hosted a town meeting on "Emergency Information" on Wednesday, February 18, 1998. Twelve participants including a deaf blind citizen expressed the following concerns about TV captions: (*Indications of the participants' comments are found in the italics.*)

- have not been receiving captions of weather information or warnings that affect the daily functions of the deaf and hard of hearing population.
- have been receiving captions about traffic information or warnings that affect the daily commute to work, medical appointments and other activities of daily living.
- weather captioned information and emergency forecast information is often blocked by a listing of the schools and other public agencies which are closed or delayed..
- the caption: "sorry, captioning not available" is perceived by consumers as insensitive to their needs.
- special reports like special announcements that interrupt regular programs, are not captioned.
- sometimes there are problems with incomplete captioning or captions that are running too fast to read.

- the emergency information is often in scrolling type on TV captions on line 21 and is not visible over the regular captions.
- graphic illustrations i.e. a map of Connecticut with weather warnings such as a tornado watch are very clear, visible and preferred by deaf/HH consumers.  
*(That illustration is very beneficial to deaf and hard of hearing residents with fifth grade reading level and foreigners.)*
- there is a need of captions in Spanish for the non-English population here in CT.
- not to be able to hear the sound of emergency warnings that are often broadcasted during town emergency drills in Connecticut.  
*(This drill sound for a specific town could be open captioned during regular TV programs by TV stations to show their sensitivity to these TV viewers with hearing disabilities in the community.)*
- there is a lack of emergency warnings for deaf blind people who are isolated from a society and who are independent and employed.  
*(They could be alerted through vibrating beepers that could be reflected from a TV or a radio to assure them of safety and security.)*

Line 21 was also discussed. Some deaf participants stated that while traveling out of the country, they did not have any problems reading emergency captions or captioned news in Europe, Ireland or Russia. The captions in those countries are placed at the top of the TV programs. These captions were not in solid backgrounds. The captions appeared on the normal scenery of the TV program.

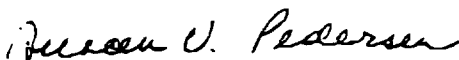
The consumer focus group expressed their frustrations about the lack of captioned video tapes and TV programs. They do not believe that they are getting equal access due to the low percentage of captioned programs. They are looking forward to the enforcement of new regulations along with advancements in technology like digital TV.

With the consumers at this town meeting suggested that CDHI establish an active role in leading the new council focusing on the issues mentioned above with the TV stations in our state. The new resolutions will be helpful in increasing awareness of deaf/HH consumers.

The citizens of Connecticut with hearing disabilities are asking that FCC seriously consider improving captioned emergency warnings on TV and enforcing compliance with it as well as with other regulations concerning closed captioning.

Thank you for considering the concerns from the deaf/HH consumers of Connecticut

Sincerely,



Susan V. Pedersen  
Communications Officer

cc: Stacie Eusko, Acting Executive Director  
Diane Wixted, Supervisor

FCC Emergency

mailbox:/C%7C/Program%20Files/Nets...s4e322ba.022@BCBSCT.COM&number=143

**Subject: FCC Emergency**

**Date: Thu, 12 Feb 1998 16:25:40 -0500**

**From: CASSANDRA BORYSLAWSKYJ <CBORYSLA@BCBSCT.COM>**

**To: Sue.Pedersen@po.state.ct.us**

Thanks for faxing notice. I will not be able to attend but is it possible if I fax you the comments and you can pass it over to FCC?

Secondly, I wonder if FCC extends to other issues beside emergency issue which are cable television and fees for cable industry? I have been advised by DPUC that we must contact FCC about pricing for cable TV. The pricing is unfair in this state (and I can imagine in the whole country) due to insufficient captioned availability on the cable programs. The pricing should be lower in equivalent to hearing subscriber's rates. For example, the normal monthly fee is \$30.00 but for the poor accessibility, the price should be lower to \$15.00 or weight factor based on percentage of captioned availability.

Please let me know if possible to inform FCC of the concerns.

Did you get my press release via fax for Mystic Oral School Alumni Association? Please input it into CDHI newsletter. Thanks.

Hope to stay in touch. Happy Valentine!

Cassandra